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## ABSTRACT

The starting point of an effective school safety program is the development of a written policy statement that reflects the school board's belief in safety for its students and that is widely publicized to the staff and community. A sample safety/security policy is provided that lists, first, the superintendent's responsibilities in establishing a districtwide safety and security committee and, second, the security committee's responsibilities. These include (1) reviewing all worker compensation and student accident reports; (2) reviewing loss data and determining ways to alleviate further loss; and (3) establishing mechanisms for safety communication, inservice safety training for employees, and safety education for students. The following section contains suggested policy forms regarding vandalism and arson, staff participation, public participation, and governing body recognition. The paper concludes with suggested safety committee activities in the areas of building and grounds inspection; accident review and analysis; review of physical education programs; and the establishment of safety training, awards, and publicity. (MLF)

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MODEL POLICY FOR SECURITY AND SAFETY COMMITTEE

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## MODEL POLICY FOR SECURITY AND SAFETY COMMITTEE

A school insurance program is more than a collection of insurance policies filed in the school administrator's office.

A good school insurance program is also more than a portfolio of policies selected to cover losses. The program should be designed to promote safe occupancy of the premises by pupils, teachers, and members of the public, since prevention of losses and claims is infinitely more important than indemnity for the results of accidents.

The importance of safety and loss prevention cannot be too strongly emphasized. What would be mere carelessness in some other type of risk may be criminal negligence in a school risk. Because the school population is composed principally of children of immature age who are congregated in large numbers in a congested structure, the terrifying possibility of panic is added to the direct perils of fire and accident. This is the reason why a good insurance program makes "safety first" paramount.

## SAFETY POLICY STATEMENT

The starting point of an effective safety program is the development of a formal written safety policy statement. A safety policy statement is not the safety program. It is the foundation that supports all the various activities that make up a safety program.

The exact form of a safety policy statement is not as important as its clarity in stating the school district's philosophy.

Kenneth Licht, manager of the school and college department of the National Safety Council, stated in a paper prepared for the Association of School Business Officials, Risk Management Committee that:

"Industry, which has been a leader in safety because they recognize that accidents show up in red ink on the profit and loss statement, long ago discovered that safety begins at the top. Safety is a management function and responsibility. In other words, a plant will be just about as safe as management wants it to be. The same thing applies to the educational plant and process. If management wants to run a safe operation, it will. That means doing more than appointing a committee. It means the adoption of a policy statement, reflecting the Board's philosophy and belief in safety for its students and is widely publicized to the staff and community.

Not only does such a statement make it perfectly clear where the board stands on the matter, it also provides program continuity. A safety program which exists at the whim of the current superintendent may come or go with him. It also may rise or fall depending upon his particular interests or the district's financial condition. Safety programming, to be effective, must be an ongoing activity...the same as any other school management function. A policy statement on safety provides essential program permanence."

Realizing that individual school district needs may vary, the following sample Safety/Security Policy and suggested policy regarding Vandalism and Arson are offered for your consideration:

#### SAFETY/SECURITY POLICY

- I. The Board of Education of the Schalmont Central School District at Rotterdam considers the safety and security of students, employees, and visitors, who enter upon district property or who travel in district-owned vehicles, to be of prime importance.
- II. To accomplish this goal it shall be the responsibility of the Superintendent of School to carry out the following:

- a. Identify those staff members who will be responsible for the effective administration of the safety/security program.
- b. Establish a district-wide safety and security committee which shall be charged with the task of discovering and investigating unsafe conditions and breaches of property security and making recommendations to the responsible district staff concerning such matters.
- c. Provide staff time and other necessary resources for the effective administration of the safety/security program.
- d. Establish periodic written review of the activities of the staff to insure compliance with applicable laws and regulations.
- e. Provide an on-going mechanism to provide review of safety and security concerns of the staff, students and community.

III. The District-wide Safety/Security Committee shall be charged with the task of discovering and investigating

unsafe conditions and promoting safety and security in district schools. The Committee is to be made up of representatives from the various employee groups appointed by the Superintendent of Schools. The following lists the committee's duties:

- a. Review all worker compensation and student accident reports.
- b. Review loss data which includes the cause of loss and determine ways to alleviate further loss.
- c. Establish a mechanism for the communication by staff members of safety security concerns to the committee.
- d. Determine inservice safety training programs for employees.
- e. Recommend curriculum changes with regard to safety education.

#### SUGGESTED POLICY REGARDING VANDALISM AND ARSON

- I. The Governing Body of \_\_\_\_\_ recognizing that acts of vandalism are crimes against the community hereby declares that all acts of vandalism against property will be prosecuted to the fullest extent possible under the law.

II. It shall be the responsibility of the Chief Executive Officer to establish and carry out written regulations which will:

1. Identify those staff members who will be responsible for the effective administration of the regulations.
2. Provide a basis for the fullest possible cooperation between all responsible administrators and those agencies responsible for detection, apprehension and prosecution of vandals.
3. Provide full and complete reporting of all acts of vandalism to the Governing Body in public session both on an annual basis and in special cases of unusual or costly acts of vandalism without jeopardizing the responsible individuals right to a proper and legal defense when apprehended for such crimes.

4. Recommend to the Governing Body and action which that body may appropriately take to reduce the incidence of vandalism and protect the public property of the community as well as the persons who lawfully occupy such property.

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DATE

#### STAFF PARTICIPATION

- A. Staff members may either be assigned to the Safety/Security Committee or volunteers may be sought. Membership should be representative of the broad spectrum of tasks and/or locations. Administrative leadership should be provided at least on an ex-officio basis. Natural leadership should be encouraged.
- B. Committee activities should occur during working hours and consist of, but not be limited to, the following:

1. Meeting as necessary to review loss data which includes the cause of loss and consider ways to alleviate the cause of loss.
  2. Establish a mechanism for the communication by other staff of safety/security concerns to the committee.
  3. Inspect or have inspected specific locations or circumstances from which losses or concerns occur.
  4. Call upon experts for guidance and assistance as deemed necessary by the committee.
  5. Make recommendations to the appropriate administrative authority for the alleviation of losses or potential losses.
- C. All staff members should be aware of the committee's activities and know of the means of communication both to and from the committee.

#### PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

- A. The public should be aware of the specific ways to communicate concerns about safety and security to the committee.

Such concerns expressed to members of the governing body or the staff should be transmitted to the committee as soon as possible for committee review.

- B. School pupils should be encouraged to participate creatively through appropriate means as an integral part of the curriculum. Poster or essay contests are particularly effective at the elementary and intermediate levels.
- C. Persons living near public buildings should be encouraged to call the designated authority if they are aware of unsafe or criminal activity in or around these buildings.

#### GOVERNING BODY RECOGNITION

- A. The governing body should officially recognize those people, both staff and from the public, who have made a significant contribution to loss prevention or reduction in your operations.

Since insurance costs must, in the long run, parallel insurance losses, a district which cooperates whole-heartedly with its insurance carriers in loss prevention activities will undoubtedly be rewarded with lower insurance costs.

Even more important, the members of the board of education will have the knowledge of a job well done in safeguarding the precious lives of the children of the district.

#### SAFETY COMMITTEE ACTIVITIES

The safety committee should be involved in both long term projects and dealing with safety issues on a scheduled basis. Here are some suggested areas that should be addressed on a regular basis.

...Inspections of Buildings and Grounds - The safety committee should make periodic inspections of the school premises. These inspections should be used to discover and report unsafe conditions and practices. Also, the committee should make recommendations on the corrective actions that should take place. Some areas that should be checked are:

- .. General Housekeeping
- .. Stairs
- .. Emergency Exits
- .. Shop Areas
- .. Fire Fighting Apparatus
- .. Playground Equipment
- .. First Aid Equipment

The safety committee should form groups of 3-5 members and each inspect the premises at different times. This will increase the likelihood of identifying hazardous conditions that exist. Your insurance loss control representative can provide you with an inspection form to get you started.

...Accident Review - A record should be kept of all incidents of student injury and property loss or damage occurring throughout the school year. Part of the safety committee's duty is to review all property losses and injuries occurring on the premises. The purpose of these reviews is to determine if preventative measures can be implemented. It is important that the reviews be for the purpose of improving safety and not as a vehicle for assigning fault to a person or department.

...Physical Education Programs - Periodically, the safety committee should review the school's physical education programs.

In addition to reviewing the actual programs the school is involved in, they should help evaluate the new programs submitted for approval by the physical education staff.

The committee should inspect facilities and check maintenance schedules to be certain that equipment is properly maintained and in good working condition.

...Establishment of Safety Training

- A. For supervisors and coordinators
- B. For workers
  - 1. Clerical - proper use of office equipment
  - 2. Bus drivers - training program as required by state law.
    - a. films available from various sources
  - 3. Custodial staff - training sessions involving:
    - a. proper use of equipment
    - b. how to lift heavy objects
    - c. proper set-up of ladders, etc.
    - d. demonstration of products by various manufacturers
  - 4. Food service
    - a. proper use of equipment-especially slicing machines and knives

5. Teachers

- a. use of student disruption films
- b. proper use of equipment

...Accident Analysis

1. Study of claim reports and claim summaries
  - a. student
  - b. employee-worker's compensation cases
  - c. claim summaries - listing of accident reports by date/day, name, sex/age, location and building, description of accident, nature of injury, time lost if employee, medical aid rendered. The summaries are used to identify patterns or trends in accidents in order to rectify them.
2. All accident reports to be reviewed by appropriate supervisors.
3. All accident reports to be reviewed by safety committee.

...Safety Awards \_ The safety committee should adopt a safety award program. This should be in addition to the Bus Driver Safety Award Program. Recognition of employee's who practice safety will continue to heighten the safety consciousness of all employees.

...Publicity - the safety committee should encourage two-way communication between the safety committee and the internal and external publics.